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Article Type: RESEARCH ARTICLE

1. **Title:** Resistance as a resource for achieving consensus: adjusting advice following competency-based resistance in L2 writing tutorials at a British University
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Resistance as a resource for achieving consensus: adjusting advice following competence-based resistance in L2 writing tutorials at a British University

While a good deal of interaction-based research has examined the delivery of advice, a smaller but very important body of work has shifted focus to consider the ways in which advice is resisted by its recipients in various contexts, including writing tutorials at universities (Park 2017). The current study builds on this research by further investigating the interactional work undertaken from advice being resisted to participants reaching a joint consensus. This Conversation Analytic study draws from a collection of twenty-one one-to-one L2 writing tutorials for international students at a British university. When resisting the tutor's advice, students reveal orientations towards their own levels of competency, providing self-deprecating resistance or high-competence-based resistance. Such responses become a resource for the tutor to diagnose problems and devise solutions better tailored to the needs of the particular recipient. In achieving a joint consensus, tutors rely on strategies such as adapting their initial advice for a less competent student and invoking broader forms of institutionally-preferred behaviours. Finally, this study discusses the importance of students' knowledge and experience and how resistance can prompt the tutor to engage in important pedagogical work and to act as a 'cultural informant'.

Keywords: Conversation Analysis, Second Language Writing Tutorials, Advice, Resistance.

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1. Introduction

For many international students second language (L2) writing centres at English-medium universities can be a very useful source of support (see Storch 2009), particularly when revising assignment drafts (Williams 2004). Accordingly, advice given at such centres has been the focus of much research. Advice received in these pedagogical settings, however, is not always readily accepted by international students using English as an L2. While some research has considered the ways tutors design their advice so as to obtain agreement (e.g. Waring 2007), this Conversation Analysis (CA) study adds to the smaller body of research investigating the resistance of advice in writing tutorials involving L2 users (e.g. Park 2017). This paper is based on a study of 21 video recordings of L2 writing tutorials and tracks the ways tutors manage students' self-deprecating resistance and high-competence-based resistance in order to reach a joint consensus. Following resistance, tutors use strategies such as reformulating their initial advice to meet a student's lower competency levels, providing further contextualisation of their initial advice, and suggesting broader forms of institutionally-desired behaviours. In doing so, tutors are able to effectively tailor their advice to meet the student's specific issues.

Storch (2009) convincingly argues that to enable international students using an L2 to achieve well academically, writing support must be offered by language teaching specialists. Such facilities have attracted considerable research attention, with a host of publications providing 'best-practice' guides for tutors. There has, however, been considerable debate around the most appropriate ways of offering students advice and feedback. Some studies suggest adopting a 'Socratic' approach, in which tutors avoid directly advising students on specific linguistic issues and instead address 'higher order concerns' such as focus and organization (Blau and Hall 2002) and prompt them to think for themselves (Harris 1995). Many, however, reject this view, arguing instead that tutors should advise students on specific linguistic issues

such as content and grammar (Taylor 2007) as well as lexical choice (Nakamaru 2010) as these have a huge impact on the intelligibility of students' writing and their broader academic performance. Other studies argue that in addition to advising second language skills, tutors should act as 'cultural informants', helping students to adapt to the various differences in educational norms and expectations (Powers 1993).

While these studies provide potentially useful 'rules of thumb' for tutors, this paper argues that to have a richer understanding of advice in L2 writing centres it is necessary to pay close attention to naturally occurring interactions in which advice is given and responded to. A large amount of the CA research on advice argues that examining the processes of giving and receiving advice can provide not only understandings of good professional practice and challenges faced, but can also provide important insights into the organizations in which they occur (Raymond and Zimmerman 2007). Indeed, since the 1990s CA researchers have been investigating advice-giving sequences in organizations such as HIV clinics (Silverman, Perakyla and Bor 1992), university L2 writing centres (Waring 2005), and child protection helplines (Butler et al. 2010).

Heritage and Sefi (1992) define advice as being something that "describes, recommends or otherwise forwards a preferred course of future action" (p.368), and is widely adopted as a point of departure for CA research. However, while tasked with promoting "a preferred course of future action", staff in many organizations are not allowed to use direct advice-giving practices as they contradict the organizational philosophy. Ways of managing this interactional and professional challenge have been the focus of much research. Vehvilainen (2001; 2003) examines how university counsellors refrain from directly giving advice and instead use questions to activate the student's independent thinking. Counsellors then provide an evaluative reaction to the student's thoughts. In doing so, the counsellors support students in help-seeking activities and enact the university's ethos of student autonomy. Butler et al. (2010) investigate advice at a child helpline. As this organization values "helping the client identify his/her own resources" (p.269), they have an injunction against explicit advice-giving. With a series of 'advice-implicative interrogatives', counsellors lead their child clients to arrive at their own provision of advice, thus enacting their professional mandate of providing client-centred support. These studies highlight that advice-giving practices are frequently tied to the encouragement of particular institutionally-desired actions.

Advice-giving normatively invokes asymmetric epistemic relations between interactants, with the advice-giver typically being the relative expert in some domain relating to their professional role (Heritage and Sefi 1992). However, if the recipient resists advice, this normative relationship is placed under threat. Heritage and Sefi (ibid) note that mothers often treat health visitors' advice as not being 'new' information, rather being in line with what they already do, and thus redundant. Continued advice in such a context can result in an extended 'competence struggle' sequence between the mother and health worker. As such struggles impose a challenge for the would-be advice-giver to perform a key professional activity, much research has considered ways of designing advice so as to minimize the possibility of resistance. Heritage and Sefi (ibid) identify 'stepwise entry' to advice as being an effective means of avoiding such resistance. This involves questions used to decipher the mother's practices, which then enables the provision of advice relevant to their context. Investigating HIV and AIDS counselling sessions, Kinnell and Maynard (1996) find that proposing a hypothetical situation can construct an "interactional warrant" (p.416) for advice thus enabling its successful reception. More recently,

Waring (2017) examines 'going general' in teacher-mentor conversations. By suggesting broad, irrefutable pedagogical principles instead of directly advising the recipient on their practices, the tutor is able to depersonalize their advice and reduce the likelihood of a 'defensive' response. Such research highlights that while advice delivery and its receipt can be interactionally risky, there are various strategies that can effectively reduce resistance.

Instead of focusing on the placement or design of advice, Pudlinski (2002) examines *responses to* advice on a telephone support line for community mental health clients. When accepting advice, clients commonly report on how they will carry it out. Conversely, clients' rejection of advice often involves claims of being a 'competent peer'; stating that they could come up with such ideas themselves or are capable of surviving without the advice. Hepburn and Potter (2011) investigate calls to a child helpline and consider the actions of staff *after* advice resistance. Following resistance, helpline workers use strategies such as 'repackaging' the original advice using idiomatic language and repeating the idiomatic advice and adding a tag question such as 'doesn't it?' Advisors shift focus from the specifics of the caller's situation and counter resistance by framing it as being contrary to socially normative ideals such as 'putting the child's health first'. This enables staff to avoid potentially face-threatening behaviours and commonly results in the acceptance of child raising-related advice from qualified experts.

As providing support to students with advice and feedback is a central professional practice for educators (Koshik 2002) and a key resource for the growing number of international students using an L2 (Storch 2009), further research into advice, resistance and its management in educational settings is imperative. In a significant study on peer tutoring sessions involving English L1 and L2 speakers, Waring (2005) finds that when advice is content-related, subject-specific or grammar and punctuation-related it is often resisted. Waring primarily focuses on the ways students formulate their resistance; stating that they do not have the resources to enact the advice, arguing that the advice conflicts with their own agenda, and invoking other authorities such as a professor. Building on this, Park (2014) considers the relationship between resistance and the advice-giver's *subsequent* responses. Examining resistance in peer tutorials in a writing centre, albeit for L1 users, Park highlights the 'stepwise' practice that students frequently rely upon. This typically takes the form of an acknowledgement followed by conjunction then an account with an epistemic marker such as 'I think'. This study shows that the packaging of resistance is used by the tutor to tailor subsequent advice to the specific needs of the tutee. While Pudlinski (1998) shows tutees frequently accepting a tutor's advice by giving a question, Park (2017) finds that questions are also used as a resource when resisting advice. This latter study of writing tutorials sees students rely upon reverse polarity questions and alternative candidate revisions when resisting. Rather than diminishing the effectiveness of the tutorial, the resistance creates a space for pedagogical work to be undertaken as the tutor describes the rationale behind the advice, or changes the initial advice and accepts the student's alternative.

The current study adds to this small but important body of interaction-based research on advice resistance and subsequent negotiations for consensus in academic writing centres. As the review above shows, identifying specific interactional practices used when formulating resistance to advice in writing tutorials is a highly useful endeavour. Rather than revealing further such practices, however, this paper complements the field by showing how students' orientations to their own

competencies account for much resistance to advice, and how a tutor's knowledge of such orientations is key to achieving a joint consensus.

2. Data and method

Data for this study were recorded at a language centre at a large university in the UK. This centre contains a small private room in which one-to-one writing tutorials take place (see Figure 1) for international students whose first language is not English. The data set is comprised of 21 video recordings of one-to-one writing tutorials, each lasting around 25 minutes.

(Figure 1)



These writing tutorials are part of an 'in-sessional' support programme which offers additional linguistic and academic support for international students during their university degrees. Tutorials are optional and students can book a single one-to-one session per week. Tutors are employed as full time teachers for international students, who lead large group classes and regular one-to-one sessions. At one-to-one sessions, tutors are expected to advise the students on how to improve their academic writing, and are not expected to offer proof-reading services. If students wish to discuss specific issues relating to a draft or marked work they are asked to email the tutor the materials before the session. However, in many cases students do not do this and tutors may look at students' writing during the sessions. In other cases, students may wish to discuss their writing skills broadly without any materials. This paper draws from a broader data set of one-to-one sessions involving three tutors and nineteen international students. The study presents six extracts from one-to-one sessions involving three tutors (all British) and four students (two Chinese, one Lithuanian and one Italian). As will become evident in the extracts, the English language levels of the students vary considerably, ranging from advanced to lower-intermediate. The methodological tool of Conversation Analysis is used to analyse the data, examining the turn-by-turn unfolding of the interactions (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson 1974). From a collection of twenty-one recorded tutorials, sixteen examples were found of students resisting advice, prompting the tutor to initiate a movement towards reaching consensus. A representative sample of six will be presented in the analysis section.

3. Analysis

Students produce various forms of resistance which show orientations to their own levels of knowledge and competency, such as claiming an inability to carry out the tutor's advice, claiming to have already carried it out, and reproducing conflicting advice received elsewhere. Responding to such resistance creates opportunities for the tutor to better tailor their advice to the particular student and thus prompt them to drop their resistance. This is achieved by either reformulating and describing how students

can carry out the advice or by linking their initial advice to broader practices that are deemed preferable for this educational setting.

The analysis is divided into three sections, each with two extracts. The first two analytic sections examine the ways tutors adjust their advising strategies following two forms of students' competency-based resistance: *self-deprecating resistance* and *high-competence-based resistance*. Finally, the third analytic section examines the ways tutors *invoke broader forms of institutionally-desired behaviours* to manage one case of high-competence-based resistance and one case of self-deprecating resistance. Analyses of all six cases below reveal the following consistent pattern of actions:

Action A: tutor's initial advice

Action B: student resists the advice

Action C: tutor adapts their advice

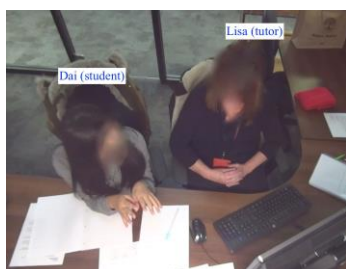
Action D: student accepts and consensus is achieved¹

For clarity, the onset of each of these four actions will be marked in the transcripts using one of the letters above and an arrow (e.g. A→).

(1) Adjusting to the students' self-deprecating resistance

The resistance following advice in the first two extracts is characterized as being 'self-deprecating' in that students orient to their own inability to carry out the advice as prompting the resistance.

Extract 1: 'Well I'll tell you what might help with that'



The extract involves Lisa (Li), a British tutor, and a female Chinese student named Dai. The student has not brought any drafts to the session, rather she wishes to discuss her reading and writing skills broadly. After learning this, Lisa gives Dai several handouts with suggestions of good practice for academic writing. Prior to the interaction below, Dai explains that although she undertakes a lot of reading before lectures, she struggles to comprehend it. In response, Lisa provides the following advice:

¹ As this analysis is examining a series of four discreet actions, that have micro-components to each, the transcripts are somewhat extended.

01 A→ Li: try and summarise what you've read |that's a really good thing to do
 02 |Dai nods
 02 Dai: (.) I know it sounds time consuming (.) [but] it's a really good=
 03 [uhm::]
 04 Li: =idea (.) try and summarise what you've just read [coz] it won't be=
 05 Dai: [yeah]
 06 Li: =pages and pages it'll be sections (0.5) |°yeah?°
 |Lisa looks to computer screen
 07 (3.2)
 08 Li: and then you'll [know] whether you've understood it or you'll have=
 09 Dai: [|hmm]
 |Dai nods
 10 Li: =to go back and try again
 11 (0.9)
 12 B→ Dai: yeah I know (.) actually I tried to: (sum) up some notes but actually
 13 it (.) like .hh uh:: we have many materials to- of course to read
 14 and sometimes because of the like <vocaburary:> or: (.) yes many (.)
 15 because of the vocab- vocabulary that I don't know so .hh it will
 16 take longer for me to (.) like take notes |and some
 |Dai looks to Lisa
 17 (0.5)
 18 C→ Li: well I'll tell you what might help you with that (0.5) if you: really
 19 narrow it down [(0.5)] to the specific sections (0.4) that you need=
 20 Dai: [uh hm]
 21 Li: =to so you're not reading long sections |your targeting the smaller
 |Dai nods
 22 [(0.6)] sections
 23 Dai: [|yeah]
 |Dai nods
 24 (0.7)
 25 Li: your gonna have to develop strategies to speed up
 26 |(1.1)
 D→ |Dai nods
 27 C→ Li: so (.) something else you mentioned (0.3) academic vocabulary
 28 Dai: uh hm
 29 Li: so you need to expand your vocabulary [so] you can speed up your=
 30 D→ Dai: [|mm hm]
 |Dai nods
 31 Li: =reading (0.7) and we will look at that in a minute

In lines 1-7 Lisa gives her initial advice, recommending that once Dai has read something, she makes a summary of it. Lisa attempts to pre-empt resistance in two ways. First, following her advice, Lisa 'shows concession' (see Antaki & Wetherell 1999) to the potential counter-argument that taking notes may be considered time consuming, before reprising her initial advice. Second, Lisa refutes that this practice needs to be done over 'pages and pages', claiming that shorter sections will suffice. Following a long pause, during which time Lisa looks at an academic writing-related website, Lisa adds an increment explicating why this advice is worth following (lines 8-10).

While Dai's repeated overlapped agreement markers and nodding suggests that she understands Lisa's initial advice, from line 12 Dai resists it. Dai's resistance, however, is delivered in a minimally-confrontational manner: rather than disputing the veracity of the advice itself, Dai orients to her own *inability* to carry it out. Dai begins her turn by aligning with the stated, general benefit of following Lisa's advice before explaining that she has already attempted this strategy yet, due to her limited vocabulary she was unable to get through the reading materials quickly. While this relates to the issue of being 'time consuming', which Lisa refutes in line 2, Dai explains that it is time consuming *because* of her limited vocabulary. Such self-deprecating resistance reduces the potential face-threatening nature of such a dispreferred act and places Dai in the position of someone in need of support.

With the focus on Dai's inability to carry out the agreed-upon-as-useful advice, Lisa adjusts her advising practices to fit with a recipient at an earlier stage of development. Lisa uses Dai's resistance as a resource for this adjustment, topicalizing two issues raised and issuing related advice. First, in lines 18-26, Lisa orients to the amount of time Dai claims it takes to make notes. Although this reformulated advice is also focused on narrowing down her notetaking to small sections of reading, it is more personalised advice aimed at Dai's particular problem, 'well I'll tell you what might help you with that', with particular emphases added to the key points 'if you: really narrow it down (0.5) to the specific sections (0.4) that you need' (lines 18-19). Following Dai's repeated overlapped agreement markers, Lisa adds that she must develop strategies to do this faster (line 25). Second, Lisa attends to the issue of vocabulary that Dai raised when resisting. Lisa further specifies the problem as being 'academic vocabulary' before stating what Dai must do to speed up her reading. With Lisa having attended to the issues that prompted Dai to resist her initial advice, Dai drops her resistance, and gives agreement markers and nods to accept the advice that is more suited to her current stage of development as a learner.

In Extract 1 the tutor uses the contents of the resistance as a resource to reformulate her initial advice, making it more personalised and matched to the specific (in)capabilities of the student. In Extract 2 the tutor also uses the contents of the student's lack-of-competency-based resistance in order to reformulate her advice and better fit with the student's current stage of development and reach a consensus. The tutor treats the resistance as indicating that the student is at a lower stage of development than was initially thought. Consequently, the tutor changes tack; the 'currently-impossible' recommended actions are reformulated as being an important goal that the student should work on over time.

Extract 2: 'Of course you will at first'

This extract also involves the tutor Lisa (Li) and student Dai. It occurs several minutes after the extract above. Prior to line 1, Lisa advises Dai on ways to increase her vocabulary while reading. After opening a webpage on 'word families'² and synonyms, Lisa advises Dai on a strategy to employ when coming across unfamiliar words.

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01 A→ Li      =and as you're going along you really need to think about synonyms
02              (0.4)
03      Dai      °uh |↑hm°=
                  |Dai nods
04      Li      =°uh hm° (0.3) so when you're- (0.4) noting down your vocabulary make
05              sure you're not writing Chinese? (0.5) synonyms?
06      Li      tch[ ehehe ]
07      Dai      [uhm huh]uhuh [huh ]
08      Li              [or d]efinitions or whatever (.) keep it in English
09      Li      (.) so you (0.5) make a note of the word |(0.8) your family
                  |Lisa points to computer screen
10              (0.5)
11 B→ Dai      .hhh actually the thing is (.) °>uhm<° er because you: said (.) last
12              time that .hh we(.) we need to think it in Eng[ lish?]
13      Li              [ uhm: ]↑hm=
14      Dai      =but (.) um like like for me:? (.) if I don't know about the
15              meaning of it I will (.) automatically think it in Chinese and then

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² Word families are defined as being "a base word, its inflected forms, and a small number of reasonably regular derived forms" (Nation and Waring 1997: 7)

16 I can under[stand that]
 17 C→ Li [>of †course< you will] at first
 18 Dai yeah
 19 Li obviously you will coz Chinese is your language [.hh] but you need=
 20 Dai [| °hm°]
 | Dai nods
 21 Li =to mo|:ve step by step closer | (1.3) to processing (0.5) in English
 | Lisa moves both hands forward | Dai nods
 22 Li >so that your< writing
 23 | (0.8)
 | Lisa moves hands forward
 24 Dai writing
 25 Li yeah [isn't] | coming through °\$eh:::\$° (.) [in Chinese righ] t?
 | Lisa points to her head and revolves hand
 26 Dai [| ah:] [h: heheh .hhh]
 | Dai nods
 27 (1.1)
 28 Li that's your target if you work towards it gradually .hh and the way
 29 your gonna do that is | by building
 | Lisa points to screen
 30 | (0.4)
 | Lisa shifts gaze from computer to Dai
 31 D→ Dai °oh o|ka:y°=
 | Dai nods
 32 Li =your vocabulary (0.5)

From line 1 Lisa advises Dai on how to expand her vocabulary during reading: when encountering unfamiliar vocabulary items, she should write synonyms or definitions in English, her L2, rather than relying on Chinese. Lisa then relates her advice to the word family-related webpage in front of them (line 9), thus linking her current suggestion to a future webpage-related activity.

In response, Dai indicates that she is familiar with this advice by recalling a previous encounter in which Lisa gave almost an identical suggestion. However, by starting her turn with ‘actually the thing is’ (line 11), Dai projects some form of resistance to it. Dai develops her turn by relating the advice to her own experience, stating that when typically encountering an unknown L2 word, she will ‘automatically’ use Chinese to ensure understanding. Lisa’s alternative approach would counter Dai’s automatic reliance on her L1, which she deems a valuable tool for understanding. Instead of treating the advice as being problematic *per se*, Dai treats it as a departure from her commonly relied-upon practice and therefore being problematic for *her*. By focusing on her own (in)ability to carry out the advice, Dai’s resistance is self-deprecating and minimally face-threatening.

This understanding of Dai’s current practice provides Lisa with the opportunity to reformulate and contextualize her initial advice, ultimately leading to a consensus in line 31. By providing an empathetic account for Dai’s usual practice in lines 17-19, Lisa ‘normalises’ (Svinhufvud et al. 2017) her L1 use as being an entirely appropriate practice for someone at an early stage (‘at first’). In doing this, Lisa clearly orients to Dai’s stage of development as a learner and categorises her as a beginner. Lisa then argues that Dai must develop and move towards ‘processing in English’, the expected outcome of her initial advice, which would lessen the effects of L1 interference on her writing. Consequently, Lisa remains firm on her initial advice and treats Dai’s resistance as indicating that she is not yet sufficiently capable of carrying it out. To ensure consensus, Lisa reformulates her initial advice as being a *target* that is achievable *gradually* through independent study using the website (lines 28-32).

While advice-resistance in Extracts 1 and 2 relates to the student’s inability to carry out the recommended activities, there are also occasions in which students offer

resistance based on claims of claims of prior actions or knowledge. In Extract 3 the student claims to have already carried out the suggested activities and the student in Extract 4 claims that her knowledge of institutional restrictions render the recommended activities too hard to carry out. In response to such knowledge-based resistance, to initiate a shift towards consensus on the efficacy of their advice, the tutors engage in key pedagogical work; further explicating the reasoning behind the initial advice (Extract 3) and using the resistance to help them redesign their advice for a recipient with more knowledge than was initially accounted (Extract 4).

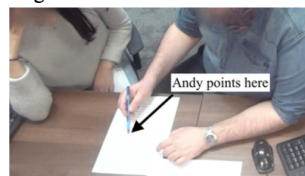
(2) Adjusting to the student's high-competence-based resistance

Extract 3: 'To me this seems like a natural break'



This extract is between a British tutor named Andy (An) and an Italian student named Sofia (So), who has brought with her a draft essay on her employability. After Sofia confirms that her essay comprises of one large paragraph, Andy provides his advice below.

- 01 A→ An: maybe there's a point where you could have a kind of little
 02 introduction paragraph (0.9) the background to what you're doing
 03 (0.3) and THEN how that helped your employability
 04 So: uh hm
 05 An: might just be the organization that would make it a little clearer
 06 as your reading
 07 B→ So: but I think this sentence works for my introduction since it also
 |Sofia points to page
 08 mentions (.) employability
 09 C→ An: okay (1.0) but if you- if you take it up to say (1.1) maybe
 10 An: |*here (2.0) so this is the- (.) to me that seems like a natural break
 |Andy draws a line half way down page and holds pen there
 *figure 2



- 11 So: |uh hm=
 |Sofia nods
 12 An: =|so you've said that (0.5) uhm (0.9) you always work hard to develop
 |Andy holds gaze on page
 13 your employability skills
 |Sofia nods
 14 So: uh hm
 15 An: okay (0.6) in semester two and then we've got some of the issues here
 16 which we'll talk about in a second
 17 So: uh hm
 18 An: you doing that not only through academic modules but also outside the

19 the university (.) good
 20 So: |uh hm
 |Sofia nods
 21 An: .hh and you mention your (0.3) part time job as a WAITRESS
 22 So: |uh hm
 |Sofia nods
 23 (0.5)
 24 An: and that's kind of (.) the things that you've done (.)
 25 |and then you go on to talk about that job |specifically
 |Andy points pen to bottom of page |Sofia nods
 26 D→ So: yeah so I can (.) |*like open a new paragraph
 |Sofia points to page
 *Figure 3



27 An: |I ↑think ↓so
 |Andy nods
 28 So: |°o[kay°]
 |Sofia nods
 29 An: [it w]ould just break it up a little bit
 30 So: |°okay°
 |Sofia nods

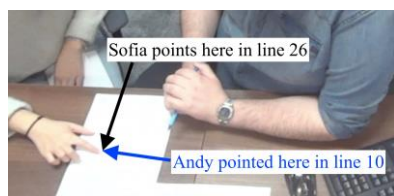
In lines 1-6 Andy delivers his initial advice for improving her draft: that she could have an introductory paragraph in which she provides background information before discussing employability. Andy also explains his reasoning behind it; that it would improve the essay's organization and clarity.

The somewhat uncertain epistemic stance (Heritage 2012) displayed in Andy's advice ('maybe there's a point', line 1) and reasoning ('might just be', line 5), creates an easier platform for Sofia to provide resistance in the form of a clarification in lines 7-8. Rather than taking issue with the contents of the advice, Sofia resists the implicit claim that she has not already accounted for them. Sofia argues that a sentence already functions as an introduction and points to it, and further supports her resistance by clarifying the reason for the pointed-to sentence being sufficient; 'since it also mentions (.) employability'. By claiming that the advice has already been carried out, thus treating Andy's prior advice as 'known' and already accounted for, Sofia treats the advice as being unnecessary. In essence, in lines 7-8 Sofia resists Andy's treatment of her as being a relative novice, having K- epistemic status (Heritage 2012) on writing expectations, and orients to being a 'competent peer' (Pudlinski 2002) on this matter.

Despite this resistance, Andy maintains his orientation to the importance of Sofia accepting his initial advice and, in doing so, implicitly challenges her competency claim. To obtain Sofia's agreement and orientation to her own K- status as advice recipient, Andy explains where she should change the organization of her work and the reasoning behind it. First, in lines 9-10 Andy identifies a position around half way down the page as a 'natural break' (see figure 2), a logical place to change the organization. Once Sofia agrees with this premise (line 11), Andy develops distinctions between the two sections, first describing the contents of the top half (lines 12-21), summarised as 'the things that you've done' (line 24), then pointing to and briefly summarising the bottom half of the page as relating to 'that job specifically' (line 25), with Sofia nodding throughout. In sum, Sofia's resistance prompts Andy to explicate *where* and *why* she should carry out his initial

advice. These actions function as successful ‘scaffolding’³ devices, prompting Sofia to produce a response aligning with Andy’s amended advice, in the same position he highlighted earlier, see Figure 4 below.

(Figure 4)



While the resistance in Extract 3 is based on the student claiming to have already carried out the tutor’s recommended activity, the student in Extract 4 provides a different form of high-competence-based resistance; the student aligns with the general merits of the advice but accounts for why she cannot put it into practice. This deeper understanding of the student’s experience and claim to knowledge enables the tutor to redesign his advice.

Extract 4: ‘So you have to be very concise’



This extract is between the British tutor Andy (An) and a Lithuanian student named Greta (Gr). Prior to this extract, Greta emailed Andy with an essay that she wrote and had marked. Andy read the essay and feedback. As Greta is dissatisfied with her mark, Andy advises her on how to achieve higher marks in future work. As part of this, he advises her on ways of writing an essay in a ‘standard way’.

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01 A→ An:   the standard way is to have a >kind of< bit of backgrou- general
02           background (0.4) [about ] the subject you are gonna write about=
03   Gr:           [|uh hm]
04                   |Greta nods
05           =(0.6) depending on (0.4) how many words you have (.) .hh and then
06   Gr:           you need something called a thesis statement? [(.) ha]ve you heard=
                                [uh hm:]

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³ Quintana et al. (2004) describe scaffolding as teachers supporting students to become accomplished problem-solvers through giving them structure and guidance without explicitly providing answers. Hmelo-Silver (2006) adds that an important feature of scaffolding is supporting the students to decipher how to do a task as well as why it should be done in this particular way.

07 An: =of that be[fore?]
08 [>yeah] yeah<
09 An: so your thesis statement which is your answer |and then an outline
|Greta nods
10 of exactly how your gonna answer that (.) the structure of the essay
11 so [first] the essay will do this and then it will do this (0.4) and=
12 Gr: [uh hm:]
13 An: =and finally it will do this=
14 B→ Gr: =yeah but I only had a thousand words
15 C→ An: it is a small one [hehehe] yeah definitely a small one (0.3) so you=
16 Gr: [uh hm:]
17 An: =have to be uhm you have to be very concise (.) uhm and usually that
18 means that- that the difficult skill then is choosing (0.4) probably
19 one thing to focus on and going into a bit of depth
20 (0.3)
21 Gr: uh hm:=
22 An: =only a little bit in one thousand words but a little bit of depth
23 (0.5) with (.) >you know< (0.3) opposing arguments covered to show
24 that you are aware of the wider kind of [(0.5)] issue (.) yeah?
25 D→ Gr: [uh hm::]
26 | (0.5)
|Greta nods repeatedly
27 Gr: yeah

Andy designs his advice with the apparent notion that Greta is unaware of how to write an essay in ‘the standard way’, orienting to her relative K- epistemic status in the domain of academic writing conventions. From line 1 Andy advises Greta on what to include, and highlights the conditional nature of his advice, suggesting that it is dependent on the amount of words students can write (line 4). He then recommends a ‘thesis statement’. By introducing this with ‘something called’, try-marking, then seeking to confirm whether or not she has heard of it before, Andy is clearly orienting to thesis statement as being an unfamiliar concept for Greta (lines 5-7). Following Greta’s confirmation, Andy briefly defines thesis statement before progressing to the next stage, an ‘outline’. He suggests that an outline should indicate the structure of the essay and provides a three-part list (Jefferson 1990) when describing a typical an outline.

In line 14, Greta resists Andy’s advice and orientation to her K- status by providing an account for why she could not carry the advice out: ‘yeah but I only had a thousand words’. The design of Greta’s resistance as agreement-prefaced serves two important functions. First, it includes the implicit claim that Greta is already aware of the advisable matter and knows the component parts of a standard essay. This challenges Andy’s orientation to her as being largely unaware of these academic conventions. Second, it mitigates the face-threatening nature of challenging the tutor (Pomerantz 1984) by indicating that she generally agrees with the contents of the prior advice. While Greta treats Andy’s advice as known-information, she explains that she could not carry it out on this occasion due to the restricted word limit, potentially exemplifying Andy’s claim in line 4 that his advice depends on the word limit. By giving such an account, Greta orients to herself as being a person with knowledge of academic writing conventions who has experienced ‘trouble’ in carrying out the advice (see Jefferson & Lee 1981). She, therefore, resists the advice as a ‘competent peer’ (Pudlinski 2002), an epistemic orientation which challenges Andy’s prior treatment of her as being a relative educational novice.

Following this resistance, Andy offers more advice and again orients to an epistemic asymmetry between them on ‘standard’ academic writing conventions. However, following Greta’s resistance, Andy redesigns his advice considerably, making it a better fit for a recipient with a higher level of competency than he initially

accounted for. Initially, Andy aligns with Greta's claim that this essay is a small essay (line 15). However, instead of treating Greta's resistance as being an account for why the advice cannot be carried out under any circumstances, Andy treats it as a description of a 'trouble' that, in order to resolve the problem, necessitates 'negotiating a plan' (see Jefferson & Lee 1981). To manage the challenge of including all of the advised contents despite such a short word count, Andy suggests that Greta adopts the academic skill of being 'very concise' (line 17). He then builds on this by describing and recommending particular activities that will help Greta to enact this skill: choosing one thing to focus on, going into some depth, and showing her awareness of wider issues (lines 18-24). With Andy incorporating an increased appreciation of Greta's knowledge-levels and experiences into his post-resistance advice, Greta drops her resistance and accepts the amended advice (lines 25-27).

(3) Invoking institutionally-desired behaviours to manage resistance

In the current data set, there are occasions when the student's resistance reveals their understandings and abilities in relation to the advised-upon issues which prompt the tutor to invoke broader forms of institutionally-desired behaviours. While this section presents one example of high-competence-based resistance (Extract 5) and one example of self-deprecating resistance (Extract 6), they are bound together by the tutors' subsequent response. In Extract 5, when the student treats the initial advice as being just one of various possible approaches, the tutor frames these as 'Continental' and 'British writing norms'. The tutor favours the British approach by virtue of the context in which the student finds herself, justifies his initial position and manages the student's resistance. In Extract 6, when the student argues that she is incapable of carrying out his advice, the tutor treats this as being too vague for him to be able to give her advice at this stage. As such, he postpones the delivery of a revised form of advice and advises her on a broader set of individual activities which may reveal the underlying problem thus enabling the support services to provide more useful advice.

Extract 5: 'At British universities it is very much state your opinion at the beginning'

This extract is between the Greta (Gr) and Andy (An) and occurs several minutes after the extract above. As with Extract 4, Andy is advising Greta on what he thinks went wrong in her last assignment and how she can reach a higher mark in the future.

```

01 A→ An: I thought that as an evaluative essay (0.5) it might be (.) it
02          might have been better to make your (0.4) stance clear from the
03          beginning whether you felt (0.4) that you know [(0.3) ] the=
04          Gr:                                     [uh hmm]
05          An: =pros or the cons was: [(0.8) ] the stronger
06          Gr:                                     [ah yes]
07          Gr: uh hmm
08          (1.1)
09          An: yi- yi- yi- you know whether you felt that it was pro or con=
10 B→ Gr: =you know I have <different> like um meanings uh like different
11          things about this introduction [.hh] some people say that its=
12          An:                                     [uhm]
13          Gr: =better not to write (.) >like< not even to write what you are
14          Gr: going to discuss and they say .hh others say that you HAVE to

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15 state your opini[on and] OTHER that you CAN state your=

16 An: [hm hm]

17 Gr: =opinion only in the conclusion because like you are discussing

18 things and [you can't] have an opinion before discussing things

19 An: [°uh hm°]

20 C→ An: well usually the sort of ah you could say the continental way

21 and I know they do this in in Germany >but I am not sure about

22 other I am not sure about Lithuania or other places [but]=

23 Gr: [uh hm]

24 An: =|THAT is a kind of (0.7) discuss the advantages disadvantages=

|*Andy points to paper*

25 An: =and then >draw a< conclusion at the end=

26 Gr: =uh hmm

27 An: but in in ↑Britain (.) at Brish- British< universities its very

28 much (.) state your opinion at the beginning?

29 Gr: uh [hmm]

30 An: [an]d then in the rest of the essay? |you: (0.3) justify

|*Greta nods*

31 your [(0.4)] opinion (.) using evidence to support whether=

32 Gr: [|uh hmm]

|*Greta nods*

33 An: =you >you know< (0.3) >using-< studies that support your

34 opinion (.) and studies that oppose your opinion .hh and then

35 you >kind of< refute those

36 Gr: ye[ah]

37 An: [>do] you see whu-< do you see what I mean?

38 D→ Gr: |>yeah yeah<

|*Greta nods*

39 An: so you use the rest of the essay to strengthen your opinion

40 Gr: I will just know I have to state my opinion in the beginning

41 An: yeah that's the standard kind of (.) British[way] to do it

42 Gr: [uh hm]

In lines 1-9, Andy categorises Greta's essay as being 'evaluative' and suggests that she could have improved this essay by giving her stance from the start. Andy treats this practice as a commonplace convention for writing 'evaluative' essays and considers Greta not following this convention as accounting for her unsatisfactory mark. This also functions as implicit advice in that it highlights a particular approach that Greta can apply to future work. By uttering 'you know' in lines 3 and 9, Andy orients to a shared common-sense understanding of evaluative writing conventions. Greta aligns with this orientation by issuing agreement tokens during the advice (lines 4, 6, 7). As such, Andy does not appear to orient to a steep epistemic differentiation between the participants as his advice resembles a reminder to follow this familiar convention. In lines 1-2, Andy also softens his claim to a relative K+ epistemic status by using the mitigating devices of 'I thought', 'it might be', and 'might have been' when advising Greta.

From line 10 Greta gives an account for why she wrote her introduction without stating her own opinion at the beginning; she was following a different convention. Greta resists the notion that Andy's suggestion is the only common-sense approach by recalling three conflicting approaches (including Andy's approach) that others have suggested. As the third approach Greta recalls suggests that one can only state their opinion in the conclusion as an opinion must be formed through discussion (lines 15-18), Greta presents the logic behind the absence of an argument in the introduction. As such, Greta treats Andy's advice as 'known' information and not something that she has forgotten. Rather, his advice conflicts with the alternative advice that she followed. By resisting Andy's advice by highlighting her breadth of knowledge, Greta clearly orients to her identity as a 'competent peer' (Pudlinski

2002). Additionally, by invoking three (albeit vague) non-present advisors, Greta treats Andy as just one of various advisors.

To prompt Greta to drop her resistance, Andy calls on his cultural knowledge and further justifies his recommended approach by reframing it as being the appropriate one for this context. First, Andy contextualises Greta's chosen approach; linking it to the 'continental way', that Andy claims is used in Germany and possibly Greta's country of birth (lines 20-23), in which one withholds the critical argument until the conclusion (24-25). Once Greta indicates her understanding, Andy contrasts it with practices at British universities, which involve a statement at the beginning, evidence-based justification and a refutation of opposing views (27-35). Upon confirming her understanding (37-38), Greta gives an upshot of Andy's descriptions, which she treats as advising her to simply 'state my opinion in the beginning', which she accepts. Andy then explicitly frames this practice as 'standard kind of (...) British way to do it' (41). Here, invoking the contrastive categories of 'British' and 'continental' enable Andy to rebut the resistance by calling on a 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do' logic that favours adopting the British approach over the continental by virtue of the context in which Greta currently finds herself.

In Extract 5, in order to manage the student's resistance, the tutor reframes his advised approach as being the appropriate style to adopt in this institutional context. The resistance to advice in Extract 6 is based upon the student's inability to carry it out. Instead of reformulating the initial advice to better match the competencies of the student (as with Extracts 1 and 2), the resistance creates an affordance for the tutor to promote a particular form of institutionally-desired behaviour to reveal the underlying problem thus enabling better advice on this particular matter.

Extract 6: 'If you encounter a particular problem, bring the problem to the one-to-ones'

This extract is between a British tutor named Tony (To) and a Chinese student, Ping (Pi). Ping has not submitted any writing to Tony prior to the meeting as she is still in the early stages of preparation for an essay. Ping explains that despite reading widely, she struggles to understand the key points of research papers. This makes it difficult for her to know if a paper can be used in her literature review or not.

```

01 A→ To:    you have to make a choice (0.4) what do I need to know (0.9)
02          in order to use |this in: in >the literature review< (1.2)
           |Tony points to page
03 To:      =[so fo]r example maybe in this part I use: (0.3) twenty (0.5)=
04 Pi:      [uh hm]
05 To:      =[ I    u ]sed |twenty different papers (.) [ .hhh ] but (.)=
06 Pi:      [>°uh hm°<]                                     [°uh hm°]
07 To:      =in the first paper I focus on this in the second paper I focus
08          on that
09          |(0.3)
           |Ping nods
10 Pi:      °y[es°]
11 To:      [an ]d the third fourth and ↑fifth paper(.) the:y are similar
12          (0.4) methodology (.)[ so I ] focus on the methodology
13 Pi:      [°yeah°]
14          (1.3)
15 To:      but for each one I can- I can choose the area that I want (0.3)
16          to look at in particular
17          (0.4)
18 Pi:      °uh hmm°
19          (1.9)

```

20 B→ Pi: so:: I- I- I think (.) uh before I don't know so because I
 21 don't know how to .hh read the resul:t and °the° limi[tation]=
 22 To: [uh hm]

23 Pi: =and to find what I should I need to find=heh
 24 To: right
 25 (0.3)
 26 Pi: so
 27 C→ To: WHY don't you (.) er:m: (1.2) tomorrow or ↑sometime this week
 28 (0.3) TRY (.) to do what we're talking about .h[hh] if you-=
 29 Pi: [okay]
 30 To: =if you encounter a particular: (0.5) problem (0.9) bring the
 31 problem to the one to ones (.) because (.) sometimes its
 32 difficult for me to imagine (0.4) what the problem is (.)
 33 To: =unless I can see (0.3) [what] the problem is .hh so .hhh if=
 34 Pi: [↑okay]

35 To: =this doesn't help (0.7) the next time you have a problem
 36 | (0.5) book a one to one (0.6) I can try to work out (.) maybe
 D→ |Ping nods
 37 its something more about the language
 38 Pi: |okay=
 |Ping nods
 39 To: =or something el- or something else

When giving his initial advice, Tony treats Ping as someone who is undergoing reading but who needs to understand and use a strategy to turn this into effective literature review writing. From line 1 Tony advises Ping to read academic papers in a strategic manner, deciding what she needs to know in order to include them in her literature review. Tony then unpacks his advice by describing an ideal way in which this could be carried out. Tony states that amongst twenty papers included he would focus on various different aspects; 'this', 'that', and papers using a 'similar methodology' (lines 5-12). Tony then concludes that for each paper one can choose what to focus on (15-16).

From line 20 Ping delivers her resistance to Tony's advice. By nodding and producing agreement markers during Tony's initial advice, Ping treats its contents as being understandable and unproblematic in general. However, Ping proceeds to deliver an account in which she reveals that this is familiar advice. Indeed, she has attempted to carry out the advised activities previously yet could not 'read the resul:t', '°the° limitation' or 'find what I should I need to find' (lines 21-23). These activities appear to represent Ping's interpretation of Tony's suggested strategic reading approaches. Consequently, Ping's current inability functions to "prohibit the option from being successful" (Pudlinski 2002: 495). By focusing on her own lack of competency instead of problematizing the advice, as with Extracts 1 and 2, Ping's resistance is designed as being minimally confrontational.

Despite Ping claiming that she could not carry out the advice, Tony maintains an insistence on its potential usefulness. However, to be able to advise Ping effectively, Tony needs her help; Ping must undertake a set of activities to reveal the underlying problem. Unlike the post-resistance turns of Extracts 1 and 2, the tutor cannot counter the resistance by addressing its component parts. Indeed, Tony treats Ping's claim of incompetence as being too vague to enable his help at this point, arguing that currently 'its difficult for me to imagine (0.4) what the problem is' (lines 31-32). To enable him to help on a future occasion, Tony recommends that Ping attempts a set of activities 'tomorrow or ↑sometime this week' (line 27) that will reveal the specific (and topicalizable) reason(s) *why* Ping cannot carry out the advice. Following this suggestion, Tony provides a contingency plan; if his suggested

activities do not reveal a more specific problem to Ping, she should book another session *and he* try to decipher the underlying problem(s). Ping drops her resistance and appears to accept Tony's suggestion, uttering '↑okay' (line 34), and contingency plan, by nodding and uttering 'okay' (line 38). Tony's reaction to Ping's resistance shows that specific, topicalizable factors are required for offering reformulated advice, revealing that reaching consensus following resistance to advice is dependent on both its deliverer and recipient.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The current study adds to the body of research investigating advice-resistance and its interactional management, particularly that which occurs in university writing centre tutorials (e.g. Park 2014, 2017). With the increasing numbers of international students at Western universities using English as an L2, many of whom coming from vastly different educational norms and expectations, this study contributes important understandings of some of the factors prompting students to resist advice and how the support staff adapt their advising strategies accordingly. While Park (ibid) identifies the interactional practices of reverse polarity questioning and alternative candidate revisions as being commonly relied upon when students resist advice, this paper reveals that the student's accounts based on an underlying orientation towards their own (high and low) levels of competency can also prompt resistance. This study adds scope to Waring's (2005) study of advice resistance in writing tutorials, which touches on students orienting to an inability to enact the advice when resisting. Indeed, in Extracts 1, 2, and 6 the students provide self-deprecating resistance, stating that they are/have been unable to carry out the advice. The current study reveals that students' orientation to being 'competent peers' (Pudlinski 2002) can also trigger resistance to advice; with students claiming to have already carried out the advice (Extract 3), producing complicating factors (Extract 4), and describing alternative approaches that they have followed (Extract 5). With international students coming from such varied backgrounds, it is important to understand that factors preventing these students from readily accepting advice are not just relating to their inabilities but also their current understandings of academic writing norms, potentially stemming from other educational settings, and perceived competencies.

Instead of considering ways of designing advice to avoid resistance, this study follows Hepburn and Potter's (2011) lead by considering advice resistance and its management - a challenge occurring in various professional settings - and very much supports Park's (2014) view that the contents of the resistance is a valuable resource that enables the tutor to more effectively tailor their advice to the particular needs of the student. Throughout this study, the tutors make use of the students' resistance when responding. The self-deprecating resistance in extracts 1 and 2 informs the tutor that her initial advice is too advanced for the student, prompting the tutor to redesign the advice for a recipient at an earlier-than-initially-accounted-for stage of development. Responding to such resistance by adapting to the current level of the student, or by informing the student how to manage the factors that prevent the initial advice from being enacted (e.g. Extract 4), align with what Park (2017) describes as being 'pedagogical work' that follows resistance (p.256). After resistance in extracts 5 and 6, however, the tutors go beyond pedagogy and recommend adopting particular behaviours that will help them at this institution. After the student resists in Extract 5, the tutor contextualises one of the student's described approaches to academic writing as 'the continental way' and his recommended approach as the 'British way to do it'.

Such a ‘When in Rome’ logic promotes adopting the British approach by virtue of the current context. In Extract 6, after the student claims that she cannot enact the advice, the tutor promotes an alternative form of engagement with the writing support centre that will enable more specific advice to be given in the future. This shows that resistance not only enables the tutors to undergo important pedagogical work but also enables them to act as ‘cultural informants’, an important professional role (see Powers 1993). More broadly, this also reveals that the subtle promotion of institutionally-desired behaviours not only occurs in the initial delivery of advice (e.g. Vehvilainen 2001, 2003), but also when managing resistance to it.

Heritage & Sefi (1992) argue that advice sequences normatively invoke asymmetric epistemic relations, with the advice-giver the relative expert and recipient as novice in some professional domain. When advice is resisted, and the recipient treats it as being in line with their current practice, this normative relationship is challenged and a ‘competence struggle’ can ensue. Resistance and its management in the current study can on occasion take the form a competence struggle, however, this depends on the epistemic orientation of the advice recipient. When giving ‘high-competence-based’ resistance, students claim an awareness of the advice, stating that they have already carried it out (Extract 3), that they are aware of it but it could not be carried out (4), and by arguing it is just one of various approaches (5). Such responses press the tutors to add further support to challenge the competency claim (Extract 3), appropriate the initial advice for a more competent recipient (4), and add further support to the initial advice by contextualising it (5). Such sequences certainly resemble Heritage & Sefi’s (ibid) ‘competence struggle’. However, when students give self-deprecating resistance (extracts 1, 2, and 6), no such competence struggle ensues. Indeed, the student’s resistance is very much designed to be minimally-confrontational, with students treating the advice as useful yet orienting to their own inability to carry out the advice. As such, students resist the advice but work to maintain the normative epistemic asymmetry between advice-giving tutor (expert) and student recipient (novice). As such, it appears that resistance advice can trigger a competence struggle, but also *incompetence* struggle, depending on the epistemic orientation of the advice-recipient.

Finally, it is possible that the status of the advice-giver is an important factor in influencing the response of the advice-recipient. Studies of advice-resistance by Park (2014, 2017) and Waring (2007) provide hugely useful findings based on peer tutoring in writing centres. However, the author hopes that the current study will promote further research into advice-resistance and its management between international students and full-time language teaching specialist tutors as this would help to understand a growing trend of professional support at increasingly ‘internationalised’ universities (Storch 2009). More such research would shed further light on the difficulties students face when seeking to enact institutionally-recommended practices and how the support services adapt to reach a joint understanding and consensus.

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